

proceed for 7 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NEED FOR IMF FUNDING

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I want to talk very briefly about the International Monetary Fund and the meeting that took place in Washington yesterday and today and will be taking place this week.

The eyes of the world are on Washington this week where the major international financial institutions search for answers to the most serious international economic crisis in years. As the world's most successful economy at the moment, the United States bears, in my view, an unavoidable responsibility, and that responsibility is to lead—lead in a search for answers to this crisis.

But as last year's Asian financial turmoil has evolved into a global financial crisis, to my great disappointment, the House of Representatives persists in what I must say—and I realize it is a strong word—in its irresponsible refusal to approve funding for the International Monetary Fund.

Twice this year the U.S. Senate has overwhelmingly supported the so-called U.S. quota, our share of a larger capital reserve for the IMF to pull threatened countries back from the brink of economic collapse. And twice this year, the House of Representatives has refused to provide the resources—at no cost to the American taxpayer—that the IMF needs to contain this widening crisis.

As President Clinton, Secretary Rubin, and our representatives to the international financial institutions in Washington this week urge their counterparts from the rest of the world to join us in controlling the crisis, the response that we are hearing is: "Show us the money."

There was a movie out that won an Academy Award, and in that movie, they said, "Show me the money." We have our Secretary of the Treasury and our President constituting an American plea for the rest of the world to act responsibly, and they are being told, "Show us the money." I want to point out that even if these other countries ante up their share, the IMF cannot take any action, absent us putting in our share, because you need an 85-percent vote.

Try as they might, how can we expect our leadership to lead the rest of the world with the albatross of the House's irresponsibility hung squarely around their necks? By failing to provide full funding of our participation in the IMF, we undercut our credibility and our authority, the credibility and the authority of the world's indispensable economic leader, in the most serious international economic crisis, at least of my generation and the Presiding Officer's.

Go down to these meetings, Mr. President—and I suggest this to all my

colleagues—and the first thing you will hear from both our representatives and their counterparts from around the world is the complaint that the U.S. Congress is holding up one of the key elements they need to construct a response to the current crisis: the funds to protect vulnerable economies from financial collapse.

Every State in the Union—from States as far away as Washington and Delaware—every State in the Union has been hit by the decline in our agricultural and manufacturing exports because of the collapse of major markets for American goods around the world.

In my own State of Delaware, exports to Asia are down 20 percent compared to last year. That translates into jobs—Delaware jobs. The crisis that began last year in Asia has spiraled around the planet to Russia, a nuclear power facing economic and political collapse, and on to our closest trading partners in Latin America.

Mr. President, I do not believe it is an exaggeration to say that without the resources to support Brazil and other countries threatened by the wild swings of international capital flows, countries as important to us as Mexico, our third largest trading partner, could be the next to fall. And yet, in my view—and I realize some may disagree, even those who voted with me on funding of IMF in the Senate—in my view, the House continues to play politics with our obligation to the only international institution in the position to attempt to control the spread of economic meltdown.

Once again, I urge my colleagues in the House to come to their senses, to match the Senate in action and provide the U.S. share for the IMF quota increase. Time is running out, Mr. President. I hope what I read in the papers—what we all read in the papers—that the leadership in the House is about to release this money, about to vote for it, is true, because time is running out and there will be a price to pay for inaction.

I thank my colleagues. I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. BUMPERS. Will the Senator withhold?

Mr. BIDEN. I withhold the request suggesting the absence of a quorum.

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak as in morning business for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OZONE LAYER

Mr. BUMPERS. Mr. President, my time left in the Senate is very brief. I have—I don't know—3, 4, at the most 5 days left of active duty on the Senate floor. I read a story in the paper this morning that gives me some satisfaction at least about some of the things I have done since I came here.

As I have said on the floor many times, there isn't anything as gratify-

ing to a Senator as being able to stand on the floor and say, "I told you so."

When I first came here, I had read a story in some science magazine about two young physicists at the University of California at Irvine who had developed a theory that chlorofluorocarbons—a gas, normally found in aerosols and freon, which we use in our air conditioners and refrigerators—that these chlorofluorocarbons that we sprayed on our hair in the morning were wafting up into the stratosphere over a period of 12 to 15 years and destroying the ozone layer.

Before I came to the Senate, I thought "ozone" was a town in Johnson County, AR, which indeed it is. As a matter of fact I spoke at the high school graduation at Ozone last year. Nevertheless, this theory about something we were doing rather mindlessly that had almost cataclysmic consequences for the future intrigued me.

I had been put on the Space Committee when I came here. I did not ask for the Space Committee—it was a spacey committee. We abolished it a couple years after I came here, but I asked the chairman, Senator Moss of Utah, if I could hold some hearings on this theory and invite some atmospheric scientists to come in and testify. And he said, "I have no objection to that." Just ad hoc hearings. I certainly was not chairman of the subcommittee or anything else. I had just gotten here. He said, "I don't mind you doing that, but you need to get a Republican to sit with you in these hearings." So I recruited my good friend, Senator DOMENICI, from New Mexico.

Senator DOMENICI and I held nine hearings over a period of about 6 months. We had the best atmospheric scientists in the United States coming in and testifying—Dr. Rowland and Dr. Molina.

In those hearings, we probably had an average of 15 people in the audience. We had a television camera show up only once. When we finished, Senator DOMENICI did not feel quite as strongly as I did about abolishing the manufacturing of CFCs immediately, and so Senator Packwood and I took it on and brought it to the floor of the Senate to abolish the manufacturing of CFCs.

The chemical lobbyists in that lobby, through that door, were so thick I could hardly get to the floor to vote. And as I recall, we got a whopping 33 votes. I was arguing that if we were to cut off all manufacturing of CFCs right now, we still had 12 to 15 years of damage coming because that is how long it took from the time you sprayed your hair the morning we voted for it to get there and start destroying ozone.

You know all the arguments: This is untested; unproved; and we need to "study" it. That is the way you kill things around here—study it. And so that is the end of the story in 1975.

In 1985, the National Academy of Sciences, who we had assigned to do the study—10 years later—discovered that there was a developing hole in the

ozone layer over Antarctica. And almost every year since then that ozone hole has grown bigger and bigger and bigger. We have phased out the manufacturing of CFCs—we do not use it anymore to spray our hair with; and we have substitutes for air-conditioning and refrigeration. Nevertheless, if you saw the Post this morning, the current estimates are that the ozone hole is deeper and wider than it has ever been, and has been growing almost every year since 1975 when we first discovered it.

The good news is, while scientists were shocked by the size of the ozone hole in their current study, they still believe that it can be stabilized by the year 2050. Well, let's hope so, because if it isn't, we can anticipate 300,000 additional cases of skin cancer.

I ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BUMPERS. The ozone layer protects us from the ultraviolet rays of the Sun. The hole that we have already caused is going to cause thousands and thousands of cases of skin cancer before we even begin to stabilize the ozone layer.

Mr. President, I tell that little story with some satisfaction, because I dare say there are not many Senators who fought as many losing battles in the U.S. Senate as I have. So the only reason I tell that story is to let people know that sometimes when you cast unpopular votes you will be proven right. A lot of Senators get beat before they ever get a chance to be proven right.

I voted against more constitutional amendments than any Senator in the U.S. Senate. I am proud of every one of them. Rest assured, if they bring the flag desecration amendment up again, I will be happy to vote against that, too, for reasons I will not belabor now.

I see my good friend from Nevada wanting to speak. And I want to follow him on the matter pending before the Senate.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I say to my friend from Arkansas, the mere fact that you lose the vote on the floor does not mean that you lose the issue. And I say to my friend, I have been on the floor on the Senator's side, joining him on a number of causes which we have won and which we have lost; and I have been his adversary on a number of issues. I only wish that everyone had the Senator's demeanor, his ability and his sense of fairness. We would be a much better Senate, a much better country.

Mr. BUMPERS. I thank the Senator for his comments.

PRESCRIPTION CONTRACEPTION EQUITY AMENDMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, one of the distinct honors I have had is joining with the senior Senator from Maine in legislation that passed unanimously in this body and passed by an overwhelming margin in the House. It was an amendment we placed in the Treasury-Postal Service bill. It was a bill that we had introduced on the floor.

On this occasion, we decided to limit it just to Federal employees, which we did. We were elated that we were able to make great strides on this issue about which we felt so strongly. And we were contemplating the day when this bill would be signed and become law, because certainly it should. It passed over here unanimously; passed the House by an overwhelming margin.

I cannot speak for my colleague from Maine, but I am sure she feels just as disappointed as I am that this bill was stripped during the conference of the Treasury-Postal Service bill for really no reason. There was no debate among the conferees. It was just taken from the bill.

It would be easy for me to be partisan here and say this is some cabal by the Republicans. The fact of the matter is, Mr. President, this bill had bipartisan support. It was not a Democratic bill; it was not a Democratic amendment. It was not a Republican bill, a Republican amendment.

So I am here to complain about the process. This should not have happened. I am not going to point fingers as to why it happened, but it happened. I am tremendously disappointed.

What am I talking about? I am talking about a bill that the senior Senator from Maine and I have been working on for over a year, a bill that has 35 cosponsors in the Senate. It is a bill that recognizes that each year in this country there are 3.6 million unintended pregnancies. Forty-four percent of those pregnancies wind up with abortion. We find that insurance companies' health care providers routinely pay for abortions, vasectomies, tubal ligations, but they don't pay for the simple contraceptives that are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. There are only five. They don't pay for them.

We are saying it should be done. Women pay almost 70 percent more for health care than men. It seems unusual that when Viagra came out there was a mad rush to make sure that there was insurance coverage and every other kind of coverage for Viagra. We said at that time, the Senator from Maine and I, shouldn't we recognize the fact that women pay more, that insurance companies and health maintenance agencies do not pay for contraceptives and they should? We would save huge amounts of money. We would have healthier mothers and healthier babies. But it doesn't appear we are going to have it this year.

Our bill, called the Prescription Contraceptive Fairness Act, would apply

this to Federal health care plans. There are 374 different health care plans under the Federal system that would cover these pills or the other four devices. It would save money.

It was killed in conference based upon some illusion that it had something to do with abortion. It has nothing to do with abortion. In fact, it would cut down on abortions. We are not forcing anyone to use contraceptives if they don't want to. We think they should be made available.

I was on a talk show. A woman called in and said, "I'm pregnant with our third child. I'm a diabetic. I would prefer I were not pregnant. I'm going to carry the baby to term but it could endanger my health. I hope the baby is healthy. My husband's insurance company does not cover contraceptives, and as a result of that, I'm pregnant because the stuff we used doesn't work very well." There are a multitude of stories just like this. Remember, there are 3.6 million unintended pregnancies in our country every year. Not every 10 years—every year.

I am embarrassed this was stripped from the bill for some reason that is not justifiable. The Federal Government serves as a role model for other employers across the Nation. This would have been a great start. It has received support from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. We have received little static from the insurance companies. Why? It creates an even playing field. If they all have to do the same thing, it doesn't hurt anyone. In the long run, people in the plans would save money.

Individuals who led the effort to strip this historic amendment from this Treasury-Postal Service bill are ignoring the will of both the House and the Senate. The House voted in favor of this amendment in July; the Senate accepted our amendment in July, also. I don't think it is fair. I think these individuals who feel they have the authority to ignore the decision already made in both Houses should consider why they did this. They had no good reason to do it. It has nothing to do with abortion, which is supposedly the reason it was done.

Politics aside, the real losers in this battle are the 1.2 million women covered under the FEHBP system who will continue to be denied the quality in health care coverage they deserve. People who fought behind closed doors to strip this amendment from the bill are using the anti-abortion statement as a defense. That is wrong. They shouldn't do that. This argument is unfounded.

As I said, this bill would lead to healthier mothers, healthier babies, and lower health care costs for all Americans. This legislation doesn't require any woman to use contraceptives, but it gives them a choice.

I see my colleague on the floor. It has been an honor for me to work with her on this legislation. She has been the driving force in getting this legislation to the point we thought we were.